

INDIAN HEAD, MD – This morning, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) attended and delivered remarks at a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Advanced Energetics Research Lab Complex (P-167) at Naval Support Facility Indian Head. The new facility will house modern laboratory workspace for the highly skilled personnel at the base, significantly increasing Indian Head’s capabilities to support critical and emerging energetics requirements. Rep. Hoyer has long supported investments in this project and secured \$9.45 million for the new facility in the fiscal year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

“A Navy admiral once described our military value with this statement: ‘Without ordnance, the Navy is just an expensive cruiseline.’

“The American people have chosen to invest \$10 million here for this new facility and this is an important project. The Department of Defense did not ask for this project; it was added by Congress. Why is it so important? Because it is the engineering lab that houses a critical function for our national security.

“Here, we have assembled the very best talents in the entire Department of Defense who are working to maintain superiority in energetics. You have proven that you are the best in the Department of Defense. Consider this: seventy-five percent of all explosives deployed in U.S. weapons were developed by Naval Support Facility Indian Head; Indian Head performs over sixty percent of all navy energetics workload; Indian Head has the largest U.S. workforce in the Department of Defense dedicated to energetics; we have over 900 scientists, engineers, technicians, and specialists working right here; and we have the largest concentration of PH.D.s working in the field of energetics among the navy warfare centers.

“Throughout our history, we have contributed to the nation’s knowledge and development of ordnance and weapons systems and the key ingredient is always our people. The mission you perform here is critical: using cutting-edge diagnostic instrumentation, you focus on understanding and exploiting energetics material reactions.

“The opening of this new facility helps to eliminate existing lab deficiencies and provide agile lab space to meet future needs of advanced platform systems, such as Sea Power 21. Making continued investments here at Indian Head is crucial – this is a capability we cannot afford to lose. We must remain sharp in fielding the most advanced energetics in the world.

“I commend you for your hard work and dedication every day to the mission here and pledge to you our continued support to ensure your continued success.

“President Obama introduced his budget for FY 2013 and, as all of you know, it makes some difficult reductions. Some in both Parties thought the cuts should have gone deeper in order to balance our federal budget. Overall, it is about 5% less than last year’s budget, when you factor in the scale-down of funding for the overseas contingency operations.

“There is some good news for us in the budget. First, the Navy’s funding and role remains fairly steady and robust. Our ability as a nation to deploy and project power to various regions of the world will remain vital as the land role of the Army is reduced. Second, the Navy has the largest increase in the RDT&E budget, with an 11.6% increase over last year. Secretary Leon Panetta recognizes the importance of continuing to enhance our technological advantage and not lose it.

“I will continue to work with the Administration and my colleagues in Congress to ensure we properly fund your important work. I applaud the job you do here and ask you to maintain your continued commitment to our nation and its people for the important role that you play in our national security. Keep up your good work and I look forward to working with you as we move forward.”